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The Icelandic Canadian

Vol. 8

Winnipeg, Man., Autumn 1949

No. 1

Sixtieth Icelandic Celebration

By J. K. Laxdal

Monday August 1st, 1949, marked the sixtieth successive celebration of the "Íslendingadagurinn" in Manitoba.

The first "Íslendingadagur" was celebrated in Victoria Park, Winnipeg, August 2nd 1890 with the late W. H. Paulson who later served for many years as a member of the Saskatchewan Legislature, as chairman. The principal speakers on this occasion were Jon Olafsson, Rev. Jon Bjarnason and Egert Jahannesson.

Originally one of the principal objectives of these celebrations was to mark fittingly the granting of home rule of Iceland, by the Danish government, on August 2nd 1874, after a long and bitter struggle, fought ardently for many years by the patriots of Iceland. Perhaps many of us have lost sight of this original motive of these celebrations but the fact remains that we still propose toasts in prose and verse to the land of our forefathers and to Canada the land of our adoption. The day of celebration has and will continue to be a meeting place for friends young and old. There remain amongst us old timers who have attended every one of the sixty celebrations, followed it from its original meeting place to the old Exhibition Grounds, to River Park, and then to Gimli, its home since 1932.

The Winnipeg Free Press, August 4th, 1890 in an editorial "Our Icelandic Settlers" traces very briefly the early history of the settlement of Iceland,

and the colonization of Greenland by the Icelanders and Leif Ericson's discovery of America, and then in some detail recounts the highlights in the slow but gradual development of the Icelandic nation through its years of adversity and tribulations and finally it goes on to give its estimation of the Icelandic settlers here. The following excerpts from this editorial are quoted here so that the younger people of Icelandic origin may know the impression that their forefathers had created in the fifteen years between their first arrival in Manitoba in 1875 and the time that this editorial was written in 1890.

"The North-West is made up of many peoples but to few of them is given the privilege of celebrating the one thousand and sixteenth anniversary of a national event. This is what the natives of Iceland did on Saturday last."—"The historical records of ancient Iceland are the most perfect in the world and their authenticity is beyond question.

"A writer has said that it is impossible to find from one end of the island to the other a child of ten who is unable to read. It is doubtful that there is another people in the world among whom will be found such general intelligence and information. But the country is naturally poor, and although there is little abject poverty the people have had little to encourage a spirit of enterprise. They are finding that

they can do better elsewhere. They have all the qualities that command success, intelligence, industry, temperance and frugality. We in the north-west have no better immigrants. The Icelanders possess to a great degree the power of adaptation, as well as the valuable faculty of assimilation. They become one with ourselves without the least apparent effort. They adopt the ways of the country and lose no time in mastering the language of the majority. They hasten, without the constraint of external compulsion and without fuss or ostentation of any sort to become Canadians, taking an intelligent interest in all public questions. They are bound to succeed here, and we can only wish that we had more of them. Nor are they the less appreciated because they take pride in the nationality which took its rise under so many difficulties so many hundreds of years ago."

Such was the estimate of our forefathers by an intelligent, unbiased Canadian observer sixty years ago.

★

Stress has always been laid on recruiting as speakers and poets the most outstanding men available at the time and many notables have graced the speakers platform to give praise to ancient Iceland and to Canada. Dr. Sig. Jul. Johannesson, mentor and sage, is the dean of them all, having appeared on the program twenty-two times since his first appearance as a poet on the program in 1891. Now, at the age of 82, Dr. Johannesson for the first time did not himself read his current year's contribution but the ovation he received as he stepped to the platform bore witness to his popularity as a celebration poet.

At the celebration in 1924 the "Fjallkona", (Maid of the Mountains), tradi-

tional figure symbolizing Iceland, made her first appearance personified by Mrs. H. J. Lindal. Annually, since that time, some of our most charming women have added grace and dignity to the occasion. On this special celebration day,—the Diamond Jubilee of the 'Islendingadagur', this honor was bestowed upon Mrs. Holmfridur Danielson, who, robed in the beautiful Icelandic festive costume, delivered her greetings to 'the children of Iceland', from an elevated throne placed in front of a spacious painted back-drop depicting rugged Icelandic scenery. Her attendants were Miss Dorothy Kristjanson of Winnipeg, as 'Miss Canada,' and Miss Emily Sigurdson, of Gardar, N. D., as 'Miss America.'

About 5,000 attended the celebration which was presided over by Rev. V. J. Eylands, chairman of the celebration Day committee. Speakers were, Mr. Andrew Danielson of Blaine, Wash., who gave the Toast to Iceland, and Miss Constance Johannesson,—Toast to Canada. Premier Campbell brought greetings from the provincial government and G. L. Johannson, Icelandic consul in Winnipeg, extended good wishes from the homeland. Other guest speakers were: Dr. Thorkell Johannesson, of Iceland, and Rev. P. M. Peturson, president of Icelandic National League. Poems for this occasion were: Toast to Iceland, by Dr. S. J. Johannesson, (read by Ragnar Stefansson), Toast to the Pioneers, by Böðvar Jakobsson and Ode to Canada by Art Reykdal.

A mixed choir under the direction of Paul Bardal, with Sigrid Bardal as accompanist rendered a group of Icelandic songs; and the La Verendrye Band was in attendance, giving many selections during the day, as well as preceding the parade from down town, where people could view the Icelandic

FJALLKONAN



MRS. HOLMFRIDUR DANIELSON

Float (made for Winnipeg's 75th Birthday celebrations, see Icelandic Canadian, June, 1949) and the "Fjallkona" with her attendants. Following the program there was a parade to the Pioneers' Cairn where a wreath of remembrance was laid by the "Fjallkona."

The twilight community sing-song, led by Paul Bardal which has become an annual feature of the Day, was exceptionally well attended and enjoyable. The evening ended with a dance in the Gimli pavilion, music by Oli Thorsteinson's Old Time Orchestra.

During the day there was also a full program of sports, with Neil Johnson from Oak Point, Man., carrying off honors of the athletic events. His ability is honestly come by. He is one of seven athletic sons of Einar Johnson, mainspring of the prize-winning Grettir Amateur Athletic club of Lundar from 1914 to 1923, and individual champion of Icelandic sports for years. Gimli's

baseball team won the three-game tournament, over Arborg and Riverton.

★

The program pattern has remained remarkably constant throughout the sixty-year course of these celebrations. They have featured the best of our orators, poets, musicians and athletes. Gone, however, from the sports program is the Icelandic "glima" (wrestling) formerly so popular for the grace and agility it exhibited by its contestants.

While it is proper that we should first and foremost consider ourselves Canadians, it is nevertheless also fitting that we should honor the land of our forefathers and its rise to nationhood as the world's smallest republic in 1944. The "Islendingadagur" is one of the media which can serve this purpose. Let us continue its observance as long as the name Icelander is associated with the descendants of the original Icelandic settlers who first sponsored it here.

★

Ode to Canada

By Art Reykdal

When the ocean-roaming Vikings sailed their dragon-headed ships
In piracy and conquest, to the very nether tips
Of the universe as it was known in that primeval day,
Leif Eriksson found Canada—because he lost his way.
Whatever that event may say for Leifur's navigation,
It was the first link in a chain of western exploration.

But Leif's ill-fated followers were destined not to stay,
For bands of savage Indians soon drove them all away.
The continent they left behind became forgotten soil

And only in the sagas was the record of their toil,
Till, centuries thereafter, from the distant coast of Spain
Came Christopher Columbus to discover it again.

The centuries that followed brought adventurers to comb
The wilds of new horizons and make Canada their home.
Now the wealth of her resources offers timber, furs and ores
And fish from both her inland lakes and rugged coastal shores;
Throughout her central provinces a vast and level plain
Lies, shimmering each summer with its yield of yellow grain.

She soon became a haven for the old world's refugees,
For Britons, Frenchmen, Nordics, Russians, Poles and Portuguese.
They brought their ancient cultures and their separate traits and
creeds
And, intermingling, blended them in common hopes and deeds
As each unto the other lent a willing, helping hand
In the universal purpose of a democratic land.

There's a vision of Utopia before the dreamers' eyes
Where the universe is moulded to an earthly paradise;
Where the thunder of the cannon has been stilled forevermore
And humanity has banished the insanities of war;
Where all nations stand together under one vast flag unfurled . . .
Utopia is Canada, the union of the world.

This year the Icelandic Celebration committee offered a prize of \$50.00 for the best Toast to Canada in verse-form. Seven entries were received and the prize went to Art Reykdal, who delivered his "Ode to Canada", at the celebration, August 1st. — Editor.

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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In The Red River Valley

By W. Kristjanson

Our first stop on the journey north along the Red River was at the Seven Oaks monument. In our group were Correspondence students of English, Scotch, French, Swedish and Ukrainian descent, from communities far and near in Manitoba. They tumbled out of the cars and grouped around the solid, greyish-white stone shaft marking the spot where 124 years ago Governor Semple and twenty of his men, hastening to the protection of the harried settlers, met Cuthbert Grant's party and death.

The story of that event was briefly related for the student's benefit, and they were able to visualize Grant's force of about seventy riding in from Frog Plain, for a part of the plain is still prairie land, but it was apparent that they had come with the vaguest of ideas about Seven Oaks and the disasters of the Selkirk settlement. Their parents had helped to build that granary of Empire visioned by Lord Selkirk, but these children knew not how our first pioneers had to strive against bitter and unscrupulous human foes, against devastating nature forces, and for self-discipline, to make that dream come true. How can we appreciate our heritage if we know not what it has cost in blood and toil?

At Parkdale school we sought information for our journey. The teacher, Miss Larter, is a descendant of the Selkirk settlers, a grand-daughter of Jane Fulcher who, keen and alert, celebrated in 1936, her ninety - ninth birthday in her nearby home, the Half-way House, where she had provided refreshments for Lord Dufferin on the occasion of his visit in 1877. We found

Miss Larter teaching a roomful of children, only a few of whom were of the old Kildonan stock.

We turned, as directed, off the highway, on the River road, past St. Stephen's church. Here was the first of the sweeping river views characteristic of the church sites selected on the Red River by Mr. Cochran over one hundred years ago.

Our cars sped smoothly along the road once plodded by the missionaries, Cochran and Jones. Jones describes a journey nearby, about 1825. His Image Plains became Middle Church.

"March 26. Divine service as usual at Image Plains, the track was so bad that I was obliged to leave my horse, and wade for the last three miles through water lodged on the surface of the ice to the depth of eighteen inches; a crowded congregation as usual; returned to the services at the Upper Church in the evening my usual class of Indian boys."

We followed the river to St. Andrew's church. Dedicated in 1849, this historic structure is the oldest church building in Western Canada. Indeed, the place has a history. In 1829, Mr. Cochran settled at Grand Rapids, as the locality was then known, and found that

"... inhabitants were chiefly half-breeds, with but few Europeans, and a still smaller number of Indian, among them. With a very few exceptions, the half-breeds here were as elsewhere, scarcely raised above the Indians; they followed the same heathen practices, they pursued the same mode of life, and

were, indeed, in most cases so identified with them, that it required an experienced eye to distinguish between the two."

—The Rainbow in the North.

So earnestly did Mr. Cochran labour at bringing spiritual grace to his savage charges and to teach them how to cultivate the soil and to build houses, that in 1831, two years after his coming among them, the congregation had increased from thirty to three hundred. The room that was originally built to serve as school and church had become too small, and Mr. Cochran determined to build a church. The magnitude and romance of his achievement may best be appreciated upon reading an excerpt from his diary, dated 1831.

"Three years ago my house, school, congregation and church were all imaginary: the timber was growing in the forests, the glass and nails were in England, and one-half of my congregation were wandering heathen, worshipping no God but profit or pleasure, acknowledging no Saviour, and knowing no Sabbath. . ."

Then rose the first church at Grand Rapids.

Years of unremitting and self-sacrificing labor so built up the mission that by 1844 this original church had long ceased to hold the congregation, or even more than three-fourths of it. In 1844 the Bishop of Montreal visited the Red River Valley, and was highly appreciative of the work done.

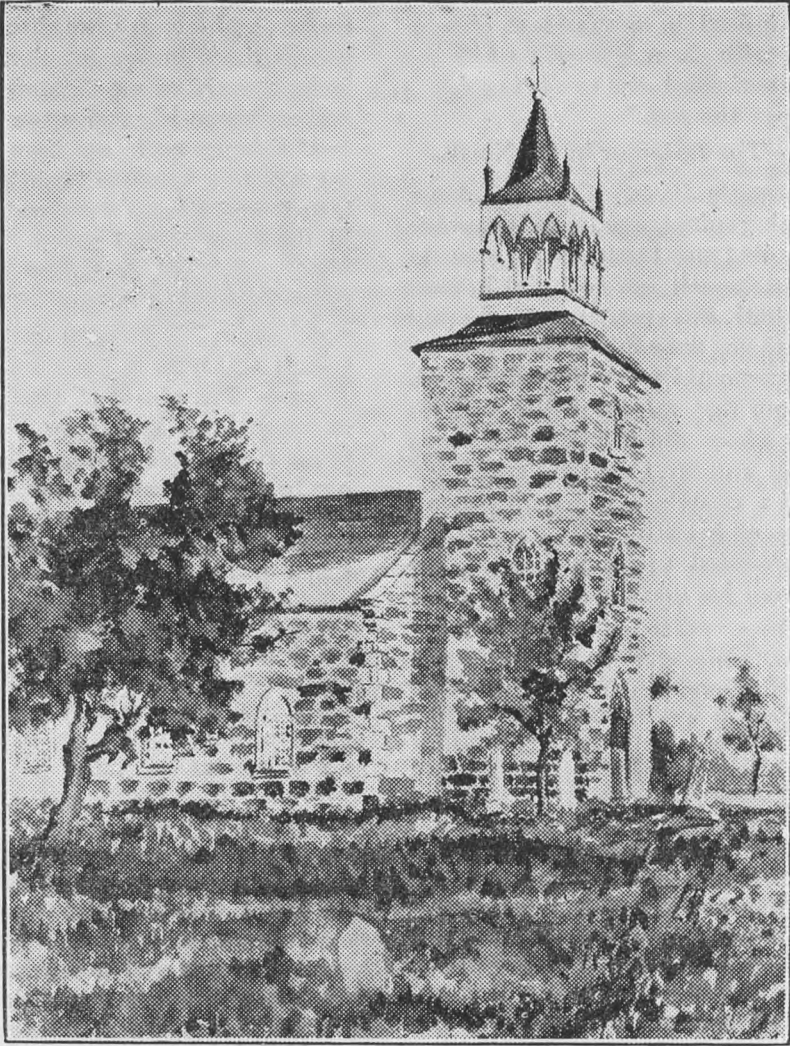
Despite grievous lack of funds, Mr. Cochran determined to build a new and larger church, one of stone. He called a meeting of his congregation, and appealed to them for help.

"Silver and gold they had none; but stones, lime, shingles, boards,

timber, and labour were cheerfully promised, to an extent that perfectly astonished me. The shingle-makers proposed to give ten thousand shingles each, the lime-burners each four hundred bushels, and boards and timber were promised in the same liberal manner. One black curly-head, descended by his father's side from the sons of Ham, stood up in his leathern coat, and said, 'I will help to the amount of 10 cents.' The eyes of all were turned upon him, and I saw a smile upon every face. I said, 'I believe our brethren think you will not be able to raise such a sum.' Raising his arm he exclaimed, 'Here is my body: it is at your service. It is true I cannot square a stone, nor lay one, but there will be the floor and the roof: turn me to them, and you will see, if God gives me life and health, if I will not work out the value'".

In the summer of 1845 the new church was begun. Legend has it that Mr. Cochran himself was the teacher and master of all operations. Stones were quarried from the river bank and shaped by mallet and chisel. Logs were sawn by hand into boards; cedars were sawn into blocks of proper length, then split to the proper thickness, then shaved with a draw-knife. A certain day was fixed to commence digging the foundation. A Mr. Truthwaite left his home at five o'clock, expecting to be first on the ground, but when he got there Mr. Cochran had already several feet dug. The corner stone was laid by a Rev. Smithurst, July 4th, 1845, and the following year the building was completed. It was consecrated December, 1849.

Just inside the front door of the church, as it stands today, there is a



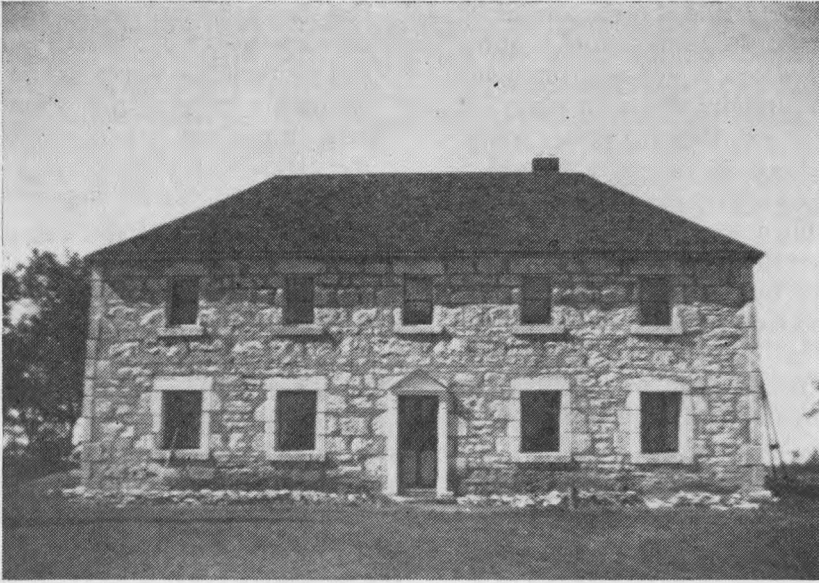
ST. ANDREWS CHURCH

showcase which has in it some of the tools used in the construction,—a heavy mallet, a rusty axe-head, some of the rough nails, square and strong, that were made as they were needed, and a sample of the original hand-made shingles.

The main buliding of the church is 40' by 76' and has walls three feet thick, and the windows are well set back. The square stone tower is simple and satisfying. Prominent in

side, is a huge stained glass window erected by the parish in memory of the founder of the edifice, a clear and lovely picture of Christ with Peter and John in their boat on the sea of Galilee.

The churchyard wall is crude stone from the river bank. At the right, a few paces inside the yard, is a humble, long stone that marks the resting place of one of the greatest of the pioneer missionaries of the West, and the builder of the church, the Venerable Arch



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH RECTORY, 1949 (Undergoing Modernization)

deacon William Cochran. A short distance away is the grave of John Lee Lewis, a former Hudson's Bay Company officer, and brother-in-law of George Eliot. There is, also, the grave of Isaac Cowie, one of the first historians of the West, and of William Kennedy, of exploration fame.

Near the church is the rectory, built by Cochran in 1850. It was designed by him, on the model of an English baronial hall. The rough-hewn stone was gathered along the river bank.

A few miles north of St. Andrew's is the historic Hudson's Bay Company post, the lower Fort Garry, with its grey limestone walls and maze of underground cellars, dating from 1832.

Courteous Hudson's Bay Company officials conducted us through the buildings and over the grounds. We were all interested in the two 3" cannon, cast shortly after 1800, and it was evident that the heavy York boat kindled the fancy of our two boys, Bill and Tom, more than did the churches. The place where Louis Riel climbed the

ramparts in search of Dr. Schultz was noted. We had to be content with an outside view of the old Company retail store with its fur loft, where voyageurs from far and wide were wont to gather for a real "old time" dance, with the Red River Jig and an eight hand reel—with eyes sparkling and feet flying.

At lower Fort Garry, the Indians in 1871 signed away their title to the territory, from which was carved Manitoba, as first constituted a province.

Dynevour was our farthest north that day, about four miles below Selkirk, on the right bank of the river. No village there, but an old stone church with a wooden bell-cote, and two frame buildings nearby, overlooking the bare river bank. The church is St. Peter's, Dynevour. **The Rainbow in the North** pictures the locality on two different occasions, in 1833 and 1835.

"Early in the spring of 1833 Mr. Cochran stood on a point of land formed by a sharp bend of the river, thirteen miles below his own

dwelling at the Rapids, and as he surveyed the scene before him his mind was occupied with thoughts of the Indians and with plans for their relief. All was a dreary waste; the sweep of the river formed a kind of a bay, the shore of which was lined with wood and tangled thicket that had never yet been disturbed by the hand of man, while one solitary wigwam on the margin of the frozen stream, with its wretched-looking owner breaking through the ice and fishing for his scanty meal, rather added to than relieved the desolation that reigned around."

Mr. Cochran and Mr. Jones had come to the conclusion that the only way of permanently benefiting the Indians was to form exclusive Indian settlements. Dynevor was selected for an attempt. Many difficulties were encountered. The proud Indian turned with disdain and aversion from the white man's mode of life, and he feared the anger of his gods should he adopt a new religion. Further, the Indians drank heavily and liquor threatened their lives with disintegration.

Mr. Cochran had several conversations with Peguis, chief of the Salteaux and the Crees on the Netley Creek Indian Reserves, who voiced the protest of the Indian:

"Before you whites came to trouble the ground our rivers were full of fish and our woods of deer; our creeks abounded in beavers, and our plains were covered with buffaloes. But now we are brought to poverty. Our beavers are gone forever, our buffaloes are fled to the lands of our enemies, the number of our fish is diminished, our cats and our rats are few in num-

ber, the geese are afraid to pass over the smoke of your chimneys, and we are left to starve. While you whites are growing rich upon the very dust of our fathers, troubling the plains with the plough, covering them with cows in the summer, and in the winter feeding your cattle with hay from the very swamps whence our beavers have been driven."

Despite grave obstacles, settlement at Dynevor was begun, and it prospered. In October, 1835, Mr. Cochran again stood on the same spot where he had viewed the site of his prospective settlement, and he thus records the change which two years and a half of unwearying toil had wrought. His own diary is quoted.

"Now, from the opposite side of the river, I see the village standing along the crescent bay; **twenty-three** little white-washed cottages are shining through the trees, each with its column of smoke curling to the skies, and each with its stacks of wheat and barley. Around them lie various patches of cultivated ground; here and there pigs are seen busily seeking for food, cows are lowing for their calves, while in the centre stands the school-house where sixty merry children. . . ."

With characteristic energy, Mr. Cochran built a church, the predecessor of the present one, erected by him in 1853.

Sentiment compels a further mention, of the Rev. John Smithurst who laid the corner stone of St. Andrew's Church. He was a cousin of Florence Nightingale. When in her early twenties, Florence fell in love with him and they became engaged. Smithurst was employed in a London shop that made spinning wheels. The Nightingales

forced the young couple to break their engagement. They met to part.

"Forever I shall remain true to you by never marrying," were the grief-stricken words of Florence. "I am going to devote my life to helping others by becoming a nurse."

"Then I shall do the same for you; I will never marry. If my present work is an insult to you, what profession would you like to have me follow? I promise that I will do exactly as you say."

In reply Florence told her cousin that nothing would please her more than if he became a missionary—to the Indians in Canada. When John Smithurst came to Fort Garry he could have accepted a Hudson Bay Company post, but pressed on to Dynevor. Let him speak, as have Jones, Cochran, and Peguis.

"April 30, 1840—We are now engaged on the farm in ploughing and sowing. . . I am so tired tonight I can scarcely move, and have found it no easy task to get through my usual evening service at the schoolroom, but as the Indians are never absent I feel a pleasure in meeting them after the labors of the day. (The fidelity of these people in their attendance and devotion at worship is still remarkable.)"

"1840, May 4 and 5— In the heart with friends at home,—thought of this time last year, and longed to be among them, but remembered that **here** is the reality of the work. There is more in **seeing** what God has done, than in **hearing** about it from others."

In Dynevor Smithurst remained, 1839-1851.

In the churchyard at St. Peters is the tombstone of Peguis, the Indian chief who saw his country pass from his people to the whites, but who in difficult times showed great nobility of character in befriending the new-comers. He long cherished Lord Selkirk's testimonial to this effect.

"The Bearer, Pegewis, one of the principal chiefs of the Chipeways or Saulteaux of Red River, has been a steady friend of the settlement ever since its first establishment and has never deserted its cause in its greatest reverses. He has often exerted his influence to restore peace; and having rendered most essential services to the settlers in their distress, deserves to be treated with favor and distinction by the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company and by all the friends of peace and order.

(Signed) Selkirk.

Fort Douglas, July 17th, 1820."

Dynevor is far removed in spirit from the settlement to the south. The river reaches have a sense of remoteness, and the white-washed log cabins in the bush are the backwash of a passing age. Easy it is here to visualize those who have passed up and down the Red River at various times: La Varendrye, the Selkirk settlers, and the Wolseley expedition working upstream, and, October, 1875, a flotilla consisting of a York boat and nine flat-boats drifting downstream, bearing the first Icelandic settlers in Manitoba to their new home at Gimli.

We turned back to Winnipeg, driving on a metal highway to a city whose backyard debris litters Lord Selkirk's Point Douglas.

Picture Credits: Picture of St. Andrew's church is by courtesy of the Winnipeg Free Press; St. Andrew's Rectory by courtesy of Miss Barbara A. Johnstone, who is a granddaughter of Isaac Cowie, the historian mentioned in the above article..

The Enchanted Coach

By Holmfridur Danielson



Joseph Olafson

Every day the young lad, son of immigrants from Iceland living on a remote farm in Western Canada, awaited eagerly the arrival of the mail. It was to bring him a most important letter, which, on the outside would bear his name in clear, bold type: Joseph Olafson, Midway Park P. O., Saskatchewan; and inside that letter would be the key to a new and thrilling adventure!

Some weeks previously Joseph had seen a news item in a weekly newspaper announcing the new model coach-building competition of the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild. He had written to a General Motors dealer in a nearby town asking for an enrollment card, which he then promptly filled out and sent to the Guild.

In due time the letter arrived bringing Joe the Guild membership button and a set of drawings and specifications for building the model coach.

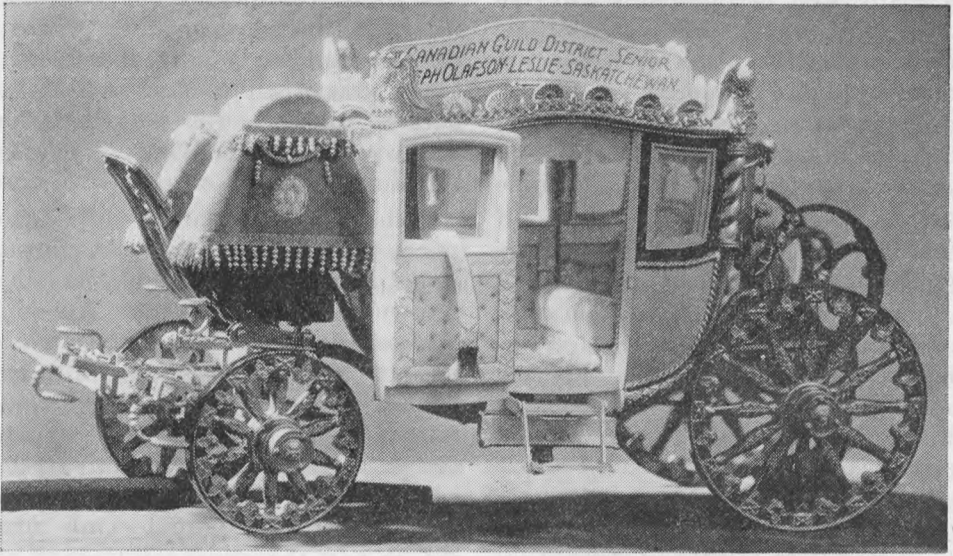
This was in 1931, just a year after

the now famous annual contest was established by General Motors, to encourage teen-age boys in fine craftsmanship, which the sponsors consider important even in this age of mass-production. At this time residents of Canada were eligible, but the task was a formidable one, indeed, for in those days guild members were required to build,—not a model of an automobile,—but an ornate replica of a Napoleonic coach, which is the trade mark of Fisher Brothers.

A scale model of a Napoleonic coach is an extraordinary intricate and beautiful piece of workmanship, containing some 2,000 tiny parts, and when Joe Olafson took the first look at the elaborate drawings his heart turned over in despair.

"How can I ever hope to unravel this mass of detail," he thought disconsolately. He had never had any instruction in blue-print reading except what he had puzzled out for himself by studying drawings of various projects in Mechanics magazines. He did, however, have some experience in construction, for ever since he was very small he had enjoyed building models of the machinery around the farm.*

*Joseph Olafson was born Dec. 12, 1912, near Ladstock P. O., which is some twelve miles from Leslie, Sask. His father is Sveinn Olafson, son of Olafur Jonsson and Guðrún Stefánsdóttir who lived at Blómsturvöllum in Kræklingahlíð, Eyjafjörður, Iceland. In 1905 Sveinn, together with his wife Guðrún (Guðmundsdóttir) and two small sons, emigrated to Canada, and two years later took a homestead in Saskatchewan. They have now retired and reside at Foam Lake, Sask. Joseph's home is now at 524 Hillcrest Ave., Morrisville, Pa. He is married and has two sons, aged seven and five.



\$5,000 PRIZE MODEL BY J. OLAFSON

"My first effort," recalls Mr. Olafson, "was at the age of nine, and was a sort of engine made of wood. This consisted of a fly-wheel and pulley which I turned with a crank. With a belt drive and counter-shaft I could make the pulley turn about 300 rev. per minute. I used this 'engine' to drive a toy circular saw which I constructed by using parts of a Meccano set. Later on I built three threshing machines. The first two were rather crude, but the last one, built when I was about fourteen, had most of the working parts of a real grain separator, including even the straw-blower."

Then the airplane came into his ken and he tried building flying models using pine and such other materials he had at hand. "But I had no luck with them," he says, "they were too heavy to fly." So he turned his efforts to building scale models of planes.

About 1929 a mechanics magazine was running a series of articles on how to build a scale model of a tri-motor plane which called for a good deal of ex-

ternal detail. After building two models of this plane using all wood construction, young Joe ordered a kit of materials and built the third model, covering it with corrugated nickel-plated brass which resembled the covering used on the actual plane. He formed the cylinders for the radial engines out of plastic wood and fitted wire into them to resemble the push rods and exhaust pipes, and felt he had made a "fairly complete model."

This model was later displayed at a "World's Model Fair," held in Winnipeg in 1933, and won the Grand Challenge shield, the highest award given at the fair.

Builds Napoleononic coach

But it is doubtful whether Joe had time to take note of this honor, for by that time he was deeply engrossed in the painstaking task of building his **second model** of a Napoleononic coach. After his first worried look at the aforementioned blue-prints, he had resolutely laid away his fears and set to work.

The first step, he figured, was to conquer those cryptic drawings, — those elusive, precious plans! And conquer them he did! For more than a week he pored over them diligently and then he 'began to see light.' And even yet there is a feeling of jubilant exultation in his heart as he remembers the first victory in his long persistent campaign.

Materials suitable for a Napoleonic coach were hard to come by on the farm so, for his first model, Joe sent away an order for a kit of materials. But being impressed with the fact that every available moment would be needed to complete his model before the closing of the date of the competition, he started work at once on some of the simpler parts.

To begin with the lack of proper tools was rather a problem. But his father possessed some of the ordinary farm tools, such as saws and a plane, and these were used for roughing down the larger parts of the model. Joe then made chisels by grinding a cutting edge on old files and bought a fret saw with some fine blades. For a lathe he rigged up a small affair on a two-by-four with a spindle made from a nail and running on wooden bearings. The lathe was driven by a geared up grinder which he turned with one hand while manipulating the cutting tool with the other. For casting some of the larger ornaments he broke up an old storage battery, melted the lead and poured it into plaster of paris molds. This, hitherto untried experiment, of his, proved quite successful.

One of the greatest handicaps in building the coach on the farm was the lack of proper lighting. The coal-oil lamp did not give enough light for the intricate work of making the delicate ornaments and trimmings, so it

had to be confined to the hours of daylight. During each of the shortest days he could only work about seven hours, but when summer spread its aura of brightness over the prairie, he was working sixteen hours a day to complete his model on time.

Perhaps many a lad, in his impatience to see his coach take shape, would have rushed headlong into the construction of the model. But the methodical Joseph was more meticulous in his approach. Month after month he crouched at the kitchen table, fashioning the innumerable, tiny parts and putting them aside carefully labelled until he figured he had made each detail as perfect as possible. Only then did he start the actual construction of his model.

As the work progressed the whole family would hover around with words of encouragement. Before long the kitchen became a veritable 'hobby shop,' with other members of the household working at various projects of their own, and happily drawing closer together in their enthusiasm and hopes for Joe's 'magic coach'!

Wins Trip to Detroit

Finally the beautiful model was finished and on July 1st, the closing day of the contest, it was lovingly packed and sent away to be judged along with hundreds of other models made by contestants from all over the United States and Canada.

Of course Joe did not think it likely that he would win one of the higher prizes, but he decided the gruelling effort had given him valuable experience and developed his talent, and so had been well worth while.

As the days passed suspense mounted! On that all-important day two weeks later when the winners were to be an-

nounced, Joe kept close to the radio. Finally, on a news bulletin came the names of the winners, and he had the thrill of hearing that he was one of the regional first prize winners in the senior division. The prize was \$100, and a trip to the Guild convention at Detroit!

Before he left for his trip east, the Leslie (Sask.) Board of Trade sponsored a banquet in his honor, where he was feted by the jubilant citizens and presented with a handsome leather traveling bag, and a silver cup, suitably engraved, which was a trophy awarded by the Saskatoon Star Phoenix to the provincial winner of the contest.

During his visit to Detroit Joseph had a wonderful time, this being his first trip to a big city. But for him this was only the beginning. There were higher awards to aim at, for at the top of the list were university scholarships worth \$5,000 each.

Patience pays off

Almost immediately Joe started work on his second model, first improving his tools and setting up somewhat better equipment. Great care had to be exercised in the work as he had decided to use the very minimum of ready-made parts in order to gain more points in the judging of the model.

And so commenced another winter of dogged, unremitting toil! There were long hours, days and weeks of molding, casting and carving; then the exacting task of assembling, finishing, upholstering, sanding, and finally, the several coats of paint to be applied with extreme care. The day before the model was shipped Joe worked steadily for twenty-two hours, and it is estimated that he put in altogether, well over the average of 1,400 hours needed by boys

in constructing the guild model coaches.

But it was time well spent! Again he won the regional first prize, in the senior division, and this time, a trip to the Chicago World's Fair.

Joe's masterpiece, being now eligible for the final contest, went before the judges in Chicago on August 16, and received first honors, and one of three \$5,000 university scholarships awarded to Canadians in junior and senior divisions. It was now in truth an enchanted coach which was "to carry him through four years of university!

But he hadn't even gone to high school! For lack of educational facilities and because of the need for his help on the farm he had left school after finishing grade eight. No matter; he would go to high school now! And so he did. With the co-operation of the Leslie school principal and Bedford Road collegiate, Saskatoon, he loped through junior and senior matriculation in two years, and entered the University of Saskatchewan to take Mechanical Engineering.

After graduating in 1939 Joseph went to Toronto to look for work. During the war, while employed with Modern Tool Works in Toronto, he and another guild scholarship winner, Lawrence Drebert, designed and built a horizontal milling machine with the most up-to-date features of any in existence in Canada. It was finished during the war and helped alleviate the shortage of machine tools for the production of vital munitions and aircraft. To those two Craftsman's Guild Alumni must go a great share of the credit for the high development of the Canadian War industries.

About three years ago Mr. Olafson moved to the United States and is at present on the staff of John A. Roeb-

ling's Sons Company at Trenton, New Jersey. This company is well known for the bridges it has designed and built, among them being Brooklyn Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge.

With this firm Mr. Olafson served first as Senior Designer, working on the designing and building of various types of machinery and equipment to be used in perfecting different processes of manufacturing the company's products. Last February he was given the position of Staff Engineer, and his work now entails more administrative duties.

Mr. Olafson has no time now for the building of elaborate models as a hobby, but is giving considerable study to astronomy and amateur telescope making. "In the next year or two I hope to try my hand at grinding a mirror and making my own telescope," he says. He also enjoys making objects out of plastic and carving flowers into them.

On the sixteenth anniversary of his winning of the scholarship, Aug. 16, this year, Mr. Olafson was elected president of the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild Alumni, which is composed of eighty-one young men who have won their scholarships. And once again he

got his free trip to Detroit to attend their convention held Aug. 24-27.

Since the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild annual model competition was established in 1930, more than 2,000-000 boys have enrolled in the Guild, and during these twenty years a half million dollars has been awarded in prizes and scholarships. A large proportion of the competitors are poor boys who lack tools and materials, but who have the unbounded enthusiasm, the unflagging patience and the dogged persistence which are such important factors of success.

Many and spectacular are the success stories laid away in the files of the Guild. But none is more heart-warming than the story of the boy, whose parents, like many another Icelandic immigrant, came with empty hands to their Canadian Homestead, there to break the virgin soil with a plodding yoke of oxen, and there, with stubborn endurance, to conquer innumerable hardships. Talent, alone can only carry one a little way. But great talent, combined with determination, patience and energy may, on occasion surmount all obstacles. And Joseph Olafson conquered the handicaps of poverty and isolation to attain to high honors and eminence in his chosen career.

Rev. Halldor E. Johnson, who in the past thirty years has served various Icelandic pastorates in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and on the Pacific coast has returned to Iceland to accept a teaching position.

Rev. Johnson has taken a very active part in the affairs of many of our Icelandic organizations. Besides his pastoral duties he was the editor of the Federated church periodical "Brautinn," a member of the executive and

secretary of the Icelandic National League, and as a writer contributed frequently to our various Icelandic publications.

Mr. Johnson was a member of the Icelandic Canadian club, and has contributed articles to the magazine. He also gave two of the lectures for the Icelandic Canadian Evening School, which were later published in book form as **Iceland's Thousand Years**.

Sveinn Thorvaldson



Sveinn Thorvaldson, M.B.E.

It has been said that a biography of William Ewart Gladstone is, for that period of time, a history of Great Britain. That, by itself, is the greatest compliment that can be paid to the British statesman. Indeed there are few who are endowed with the wisdom and foresight to grasp what is needed and see what orderly progress demands and at the same time have the presence of mind and administrative ability to carry through essential undertakings and transform the vague expanse of dreams into living realities.

Sveinn Thorvaldson, M. B. E. truly falls within that category in relation to the community in which he lived. His biography, if it truly covered his activities and the impact of his thoughts, would be a history of the northern part of the settlement along the west coast of Lake Winnipeg, originally designated Nýja Island, New Iceland,

and now, in its organized form, comprising the Rural Municipality of Bifrost.

In 1887 his parents settled in the Arnes district and the young lad of fifteen promptly left for the lake to fish and thus provide for the immigrant family.

The transformation of the settlement from the original unorganized, and in the minds of the settlers, independent territory, to the present district of diversified activities, peopled by men and women who clearly grasp their duty to the community in which they live, the country to which they belong and the heritage that is theirs, is a story of the threefold public service to which Sveinn Thorvaldson devoted his whole life.

There was a need of clearing timber, pushing through a railway, erecting a creamery, obtaining credit for the settlers, merchandising in the sale of the products of the land and the lake. In all these activities Sveinn was a leader. He established the first creamery in any Icelandic settlement in Canada. In 1903 a mercantile business was commenced which expanded during the years and, because of the sound business principles upon which it was erected, flourishes now even though the two founders, Johannes Sigurdson and Sveinn Thorvaldson have passed away.

Wise municipal government was needed. Sveinn was reeve of the Rural Municipality of Bifrost for seventeen years, a period of time during which much needed improvements were made and transportation facilities provided.

The vision of the pioneer's son took him beyond the bounds of his district.

He took an active part in provincial and Dominion public affairs and for a while served in the provincial legislature. But that very breadth of vision carried him still further — across oceans. Sveinn Thorvaldson became a strong advocate of the British connection. The love of freedom in his people, which in the first years of the settlement found expression in a local constitution embracing many powers incident to an autonomous state, joined in his heart the love of law and order so deeprooted in the British people, a confluence which greatly influenced his thoughts and actions during the world struggles that lay ahead. To him goes a large share of the credit for the splendid record of the district in voluntary enlistments, Red Cross work, Victory Loan campaigns and

other phases of Canada's war effort during the two World Wars. Due recognition of that service was given tangible form when Sveinn Thorvaldson was awarded the M.B.E.

Sveinn looked back as well as into the future. He was conscious of the worth of the Icelandic heritage and sought to preserve it. He was a member of the Icelandic National League and for his service on behalf of his people, their language and literature, he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Falcon.

In the community in which Sveinn Thorvaldson gave so much of himself there is an exemplary combining of a deep reverence for all that is of the past with a clear understanding of the duties that lie ahead.

W. J. L.

IN THE NEWS

Represents Iceland at World Conference

The Women's World peace conference, was held in Amsterdam, Holland, from July 17th to 24th of this year. Representing Iceland at this conference is Mrs. Astridur Eggertsdottir, Reykjavik, Iceland.



Traveling in Norway

Miss Phyllis Magnusson, has been traveling with the well known Concordia Choir, of the Concordia College at Moorehead, Minn., under the leadership of Paul J. Christiansson.

This choral group of 59 members gave 31 concerts in various parts of Norway. The college is appreciative of the fact what value and education of the old world will give its students, thus sponsoring this trip to Norway where they travelled during June and

July. While at home this choir has held concerts in many of the larger cities of the United States.

Phyllis is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Magnus J. Magnusson of Roseau, Minn.



Sveinn Sigfusson from Lunda, one of Manitoba's best known Icelandic athletes has been selected as one of the members of the athletic team which will represent Canada at the forthcoming international sports events in Australia.



Mr. William Benedickson L.L.B. was re-elected June 27, to the House of Commons as a member for Kenora-Rainy River. He is the only member of Icelandic origin in the present Canadian parliament.

The Country Women of Iceland

By Alla Johnson

The following article was broadcast over the CBC network from CBW, Winnipeg, Aug. 3, on the series called, "Our Country Women". It was prepared in Iceland by Alla Johnson and transcribed, but owing to faulty transcription was delivered by Mrs. E. S. Russenholt, of CBW. It is printed by permission of Miss Catherine McKeever, Talks Producer, CBC. Alla Johnson went to Iceland in 1930 to work for the State Broadcast: She is married to Bjarni Gunnlaugsson, and lives on a farm in Suður-Píngeyjarsýsla. Before leaving Canada she had worked for the Winnipeg Free Press, and had also been a school teacher. . . . Ed.

To the country women of the Canadian prairies, from the country women in Iceland, Greetings!

For we are all sisters under the skin—sisters in toil and tiredness, sisters in our love of home and family, and sisters in our desire that the world in which our children are to live and work shall be a world of peace. And so my sisters, may I introduce you to a typical Icelandic country home of today? The house is a concrete building, one storey and a basement. You enter a narrow hallway, lighted by a pane of glass in the upper part of the hall door, you are invited into a living room. It is about the size of your parlour, or a little larger. The first thing that strikes your attention, because it is so different from what you are used to at home, is that the runner on the table, the couch cover, the cushion, and perhaps a piece of tapestry on the wall are all of wool, woven or embroidered, and that the colours are very quiet. The curtains at the windows are home woven too, cotton ones with a border in colours, are drawn to the side, to let the sunshine in, and the window sills are full of flowering plants. These you will find familiar. There are perhaps one or two upholstered chairs in the same colour as the couch cover, or just ordinary chairs with seats covered in some hand-woven woollen material. There is likely to be a desk and a bookcase, and certainly a small



Alla Johnson

radio. You will be surprised at the great number of portraits of the family and friends, which ornament the walls, along with hand-done pictures in cross-stitch, or colored enlargements of Icelandic landscapes. Somewhere on the walls there is almost sure to be a long, hand-carved shelf, under which the tapestry is hung. You will miss the piano, but there is likely to be an organ. You will also miss the carpet, but hand-

woven rugs are almost sure to be strewn about.

The farm woman usually serves her guests in the living-room unless she has a dining room, which is rare. She will bring a tastefully embroidered teacloth, in all likelihood a transformed flour bag with a crocheted edging, lay the table with her best china, and serve you from five to ten kinds of cakes and cookies, with coffee. No saving when it comes to entertaining!

If you want a peek at the kitchen, come on. It is the largest room in the house, for it is virtually the living room of the family during the day. There is a spacious working counter, with pot-cupboards and drawers and cupboards over it on the wall. There is a sink in the counter, with a tap for running water—cold. The stove may be a coal stove or an electric one, for many farms have electricity from their own small power stations; in a mountainous country there are plenty of streams.

The kitchen is the dining place for the family; the large table stands by a built-in bench, box shaped, which is used as a receptacle for the children's caps and mittens, and what not.

May I show you down the basement? First there is the pantry, a large one, for it is not only used as a storage place for food, but it also contains the milk separator and the milking pails are stored here, unless there is a milk house in connection with the cow stable.

Next comes the wash house, for in Icelandic farm homes washing is a chore deserving of a special room. The Icelandic country woman has not yet made the acquaintance of washing machines—although she is beginning to dream of them in connection with the great development of electricity, but above all, American trade. In every wash house there is a boiler stove, tak-

ing from 45 to 80 quarts of water. The washing is done on a washboard in a wooden tub, and the rinsing by letting water from the tap run through the washing in a bathtub—enamel or concrete—until the water is clear. This tub may also serve as the family bathtub, the water heated in the boiler.

I'll spare you a visit to the furnace room, and the room where the family supply of flour and cereals is kept—let alone the room which contains odds and ends; suitcases, spare boxes, old clothing, and so on.

Every house built within the last ten years is almost sure to have a bathroom. At least there will be a lavatory and washbowl. But very few have hot water in summer, except those built near hot springs.

And now to bed. Chances are that you'll find it rather uncomfortable for it has no wire spring, let alone a coil spring—but only a board bottom. It is a home made wooden bed. You sink into the thick feather tick, put your head on a thick pillow encased in an envelope pillow cover buttoned at the bottom, and pull the eiderdown covering over you. It is not a quilted one, but rather a bed-length bag filled with eiderdown, which puffs up when it gets warm—and is it warm! It is encased in a snowy white cover, buttoned at the foot, and the top has a wide crocheted insertion and the housewife's monogram in white embroidery. This cover serves as an upper sheet.

Engaging in conversation with the housewife, you will most likely find her well posted in foreign affairs and with fair knowledge of life in other countries. You will find that she knows the works of many of the best English, American, French and Scandinavian authors, for these are translated annually, and the Icelandic people are voracious readers. In other words you

will find that her education is not limited to her schooling, which is generally not beyond the eighth grade. But she will in addition probably have attended one of the many schools of household arts, which are open to girls of 18 years and over. There she will have learned nutrition and cooking, household management, sewing and weaving, and wool and silk embroidery.

Besides her household duties, the Icelandic farm woman usually does the milking, tends the poultry, and helps with the hay-making in summer. the hay-making season is the busiest of all, for Icelandic farming is in all but a few areas limited to the raising of cattle and sheep, which are housed and fed during the winter. Haying is done, firstly, on cultivated land, and secondly, on wild grassland. Generally speaking, only the cultivated land, which surrounds the home, and is called a "tún" (toon) lends itself to the use of machinery. It has been levelled by ploughing and harrowing; from the hand of nature most Icelandic grassland, except along the bank of rivers is anything but level. It is covered with hummocks, which resemble tub-sized warts, and must be mown with the scythe and raked by hand. As a result, the hay-making season lasts a long time—generally from the beginning of July to the middle of September. A really prosperous farmer is one who has levelled such a large "tún" that he does not have to make any wild hay.

The woman's share in this work is the raking and drying of the hay. At home, that is, on the tún, she rakes by hand behind the horsedrawn rake, turning the hay, taking it up into little mounds in the late afternoon (lest there be dew at night) and scattering it again in the morning to let dry in the sun and wind. When the

grassland haying begins, she takes the haymakers their hot meal at noon and then helps with the haymaking until it is time to go home and think about the cows and supper.

The Icelandic country woman's working year, outside of the regular household duties, may be roughly divided as follows: January to March she uses her spare time for knitting and weaving (she has her yarn spun at the local mills). April and May, she does her spring housecleaning and helps with the lambing, and with the drying and putting up of the "tað" or sheeps' dung, which is used as fuel. prepares the garden, sows the potatoes and vegetables. June, she does her sewing for the summer, washes the wool after shearing and prepares it for market. July to September, she helps with the hay-making, and cans such vegetables and berries as she has available, October, she cans meat, makes head cheese, sausages, and other foods incidental to the fall slaughtering of the sheep. November, she does her sewing for the winter, and her fall housecleaning. December she is busy with her preparations for Christmas.

In addition to this, the Icelandic housewife must be prepared every summer to entertain a host of holiday makers from the towns, for during their summer holidays townspeople flock to the country. She must be prepared to put up for the night anywhere from one person to a carful of people, at any time, and usually without warning, the whole summer through. Needless to say, this makes her a great deal of extra work, but it also breaks the monotony of life and provides her with a good deal of pleasure.

The Icelandic country woman has, up to this, been rather negligent in taking part in public affairs. She has

been exceedingly lax in using her influence politically, even in local matters. Women, however, have seats on the boards of the household schools, and these schools are partly supported by women's organizations. Most country women belong to the women's clubs, and these are organized into district and national unions. Their scope of activity is wide and rather loosely defined, however. These clubs raise a good deal of money annually, by concerts, bazaars and the like. The money is used in support of the household schools and various activities, such as the local libraries and community halls, and for defraying the expense of local courses in home cooking, sewing and weaving.

Financially, the country woman has no status at all, apart from that of her husband. If she happens to make some money, her earnings are added to those of her husband when it comes to levying taxes. Legally, she has no separate

financial rights— not yet. But there is a bill before parliament at the present time, which proposes that women shall be taxed separately from their husbands, and that where the woman works exclusively in the home, half of the financial profit of the home—be it in town or country— shall be considered as the wife's share. But the bill does not say whether deficit shall be considered the wife's responsibility in same proportion!

And now, my sisters under the skin, does the same problem worry you as me? How to get everything done the way we want it in the time we want it to get done, because we must do it alone? Help in the house is a problem. Girls go to the towns, where work is easier, even though the wages are not higher, perhaps. There is only one way of solving it. More household conveniences. Greater opportunities for the young people for recreation in the country. That is what we are aiming at. And you too, is that not so?

GIMLI ART WORKSHOP

A most successful six weeks course in fine arts, sponsored by the Winnipeg School of Arts was offered at Gimli, Man. this summer.

Instruction was given in oil and watercolor painting, figure drawing and painting, pictorial composition, landscape painting, sculpture in clay, abstract painting, portrait drawing, leather work and ceramics.

Miss Carol Feldsted, lecturer in fine arts at the University of Manitoba, and head of the art teacher training course for the Department of Education, was the director of this course. Other instructors at the Gimli workshop were Donald E. Strange, Takao Tanabe, and Donald P. Roy.

Premier Byron (Boss) Johnson won an overwhelming personal victory at the polls in his riding of New Westminster, B.C., in the provincial election, June 15th. It is a fine tribute to Premier Johnson's administrative and executive ability that his Coalition government has been returned with 40 members in a legislature of 48 seats. No legislature in B.C. has had such unanimity of support since 1912.



Mr. Karl B. Thorkelson, B.A., B.Ed., formerly school principal at Morden, Manitoba, has been appointed Inspector of Schools with headquarters at Virden, Manitoba.

University Professor Has Varied Career



Prof. J. B. Bearnson

This year Dr. Julius Benedict Bearnson, of the University of Utah, was requested to write a comprehensive article on **Labor in Utah**, for the Labor Encyclopedia, Washington, D.C. This he did in short order, as he is no stranger to the economic and labor situation in his State. He is author of many surveys and bulletins reporting results of research work in these fields, including **What Every Worker Should Know About the Wagner Act**, and five articles on a survey of the Economic Status of the University of Utah Alumni for the years 1928-1935, inclusive, in co-operation with the United States Office of Education. In these matters Dr. Bearnson conducted an independent survey for the years 1936,'37 and '38:

Dr. Bearnson is Professor of Economics at the University of Utah where he has been since 1921. Prior to that, after his service in World War I, he

was employed for over six years as Special Agent, Vocational Advisor, Training Supervisor, and Co-ordinator for the United States Veteran's Bureau.

He has been awarded a B. S. degree from the Utah Agricultural College, an A. M. degree from Stanford University, and a Ph.D. degree from the University of Virginia.

When he entered the war service Dr. Bearnson was principal of the Logan High School and acting superintendent of Logan City Schools. He had previously served as principal of the Benson School in Logan, coming from Fielding, Box Elder county where he started his teaching career in the sixth grade during the year 1910-1911.

He was head of the Publicity Department at the Utah State Agricultural College during 1914-1915, and did part time teaching there during 1919-1920. He was superintendent of the Shelley, Idaho schools during 1915-1916, and was awarded a research scholarship at the University of Chicago during 1925-1926.

At the university of Utah he teaches economics, labor economics, and labor legislation in the College of Business. For 12 years he was a member of the graduation committee and served for six years on the credits committee and for six years on the lower division advisory council, and is frequently called upon to lecture on labor and economic problems, and to demonstrate his hobby, prestidigitation, (sleight of hand).

While a student in college Dr. Bearnson debated, was manager of Debating, associate editor of the college paper, played football, and won the medal given by the Utah Sons of the Revolution, for the best oration on patriotism.

Dr. Bearnson belongs to the American Economic Association, Pacific Coast Economic Association, Utah Educational Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Association of University Professors, and to the following fraternities and clubs: Beta Sigma Gamma, Tau Kappa Alpha, Alpha Kappa Psi, Phi Delta Kappa, Sigma Nu, and Aztec club. He is listed in the 1948 Directory of the American Economic Association, and in *Who's Who in the West*, 1948.

Dr. Bearnson was born in Spanish Fork, Utah, Oct. 20, 1887. His father, who came from Reykjavík, at the age of 25, was Julius, son of Rev. Jón Bjarnason (of Mið-Mörk) and his mother was Gróa Benedict, (daughter of Þorlákur Benediktsson) from Hrífnes, Skaftártunga, who left Iceland when seven years old.

Two years after his birth, Dr. Bearnson's mother died and he was reared by his aunt, Mrs. Thorgerda B. Snell

who became a real mother to him. She was the wife of George D. Snell, member of the State Constitutional Convention, House of Representatives, first mayor first Bishop, and first banker of Spanish Fork.

Dr. Bearnson was married to Margaret Sherrod in 1921 and they have one daughter, Dorothy, who has two degrees from the University of Utah and presently teaches Art there. Mrs. Bearnson also has two degrees from the State University and taught English there during 1946-1947. Mrs. Bearnson served as Representative during two sessions of the State Legislature. She has had two of her short stories listed in *O'Brien's Best Short Stories Of The Year*. She is at present teaching at the Libbie Edward school of the Granite School District.

The Bearnsons particularly enjoy traveling and hope in the near future to visit Canada and also Iceland.

—John Y. Bearnson

Appointed to an Important Position

Harold Thompson, B. Comm., I.S.A., has been appointed Assistant Actuary with the Monarch Life Insurance Co. Harold graduated from the University of Manitoba with the Commerce Degree in 1946, and became a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries, passing his final exams in 1949, with honors, at the age of 26. He joined the Monarch Life in 1946—spent one half of his time that year instructing in Actuarial Science at the University of Manitoba.

Harold served in the R.C.A.F. and the Royal Canadian Navy during the years 1944-46.

Harold took an active part in sports, his main interest being hockey. He was goalie for the Winnipeg Rangers Junior Hockey Team in 1940-41 when they

won the Memorial Cup (Dominion Championship).

He was married in Sept. 1946 to Beatrice Shipman.

Harold is the son of Hrodny and the late Haraldur Thompson of 634 Ingersoll St., Winnipeg.



Receives Writers Subsidy

The Government of Iceland recently honored Dr. S. J. Johannesson, with a Writers Subsidy of 1,800 krónur per year. This recognition was highly merited. As was reported in this magazine last year Dr. and Mrs. Johannesson were invited to visit Iceland, but unfortunately were unable to accept the invitation.

Mrs. Danielson Trains Choirs in N. Dakota

The 'Báran' Chapter of the Icelandic National League sponsored a most interesting and worth while project this summer,—that of an Icelandic Vacation School for the communities of Mountain, Gardar, and the Hallson-Akra area. They were fortunate in being able to engage the services of Mrs. Holmfridur Danielson, of Winnipeg, as director.

It was apparent from the start that this was to be no ordinary undertaking, as the children soon became inspired with real enthusiasm and their enjoyment in the work was evident. There were sixty-four of them who attended regularly during the five weeks' course, and many more came, whose attendance was later unavoidably interrupted.

Up to this time the youngest members of the choirs had known no Icelandic at all, and while the older ones seemed to understand it when spoken to them, the vocabulary of most of them limited them to only the simplest replies. It was, therefore, all the more remarkable that, at the end of the course, they had learned to perfection the words and the music of eight Icelandic songs, which they presented in two concerts given by the three combined choirs. In addition there were recitations, and the Gardar group gave a play: "Töfra Skyrtn." The play included two extra songs and a gypsy dance routine. The costumes and setting were most attractive, and those who heard the children's performances were delighted as well as surprised that so much fine work had been accomplished in such a short time.

The large choir made a very pleasing stage appearance and the audience was much impressed by its sensitive

response to the conductor's every gesture. The children's enunciation of the Icelandic language was excellent, as was their interpretation of the texts and their quality of tone, while their spontaneous gaiety communicated itself to the listeners.

The concerts were held at Gardar and at Mountain and were well attended. At the end of each concert the children came forward with gifts to show their love and appreciation of Mrs. Danielson. The chapter, "Báran" honored her with flowers and a gift presented by the president, Mr. G. Jonasson. The secretary, H. B. Grimson presented each child with a card suitably inscribed to commemorate their participation in this cultural work.

Beside training in music, reading and conversation, the pupils were given interesting short lectures on the history and legends of Iceland, including a useful map study.

The teachers who assisted with the school were: Mrs. G. Gudmundson, Mrs. G. Johannesson and Miss Norma Laxdal (who taught the dance routines), at Gardar; Mrs. B. F. Olgeirson, Miss Sylvia Johnson, Mrs. Valdimar Bjornson and Mrs. S. A. Bjornson (who also accompanied the choir), at Mountain; and Miss Marvel Kristjanson and Mrs. Sig Samson who played the accompaniments at Gardar and Hallson, respectively.

The organization, "Báran," Mrs. Danielson and all those who contributed to this venture are to be congratulated on its success.

—Sigrun Northfield Bjornson.

Two Singers at the West Coast

By Jakobina Johnson

The city of Tacoma, (population 137,000) is beautifully located on our picturesque Puget Sound, with stately Mt. Rainier in the distance. A number of families of Icelandic background have made their homes in this city and neighboring communities, for a good many years. Although we do not hear of any Icelandic clubs, they keep in touch with each other to some extent and meet socially, when an occasion arises.

In this group is Mrs. Ninna Stevens, for many years a soloist of note in this area, and well known in musical circles in Tacoma and surrounding communities on the Sound. From earliest childhood she remembers music in the homes of her parents and grandparents. She took part in children's programs and as her fine, rich soprano voice developed, became prominent in the Blaine High School Operetta. From then on, her life has been 'one musical program after another', as she herself expresses it.

Ninna Stevens was born Feb. 7, 1903, in the Hallson community N. Dakota. With her parents, Halldor B. and Ingibjorg Johnson she moved to Blaine, Wash., in 1912, and after the death of her mother lived with her maternal grandparents, Guðlaug and Petur Hansen, until her marriage to A. Marshall Stevens. Their home has been at Tacoma since 1935.

Her training in music has included voice, piano and choral work, and she has appeared as soloist at some of the most outstanding concerts at Tacoma and Seattle. She has sung at the Leif Erikson Day Festivals, the Norman



Mrs. Ninna Stevens

Male Chorus concerts, Tacoma Ladies' Music club, the Bellingham Ladies' Music club, the Seattle Convention of the Washington Federation of Music clubs, the Folk Festival at Vancouver, B.C., and the Women's League of Pacific Lutheran College. She was soloist at the Grand Concert held at Tacoma, in honor of the Crown Prince Olav of Norway, and Princess Martha, on their Pacific N.W. tour.

In Tacoma she has given at least 35 programs featuring Iceland, — giving first a talk and then singing Icelandic songs, often appearing in costume. She has given generously of her artistic gifts to the groups of Icelandic people, and they are indeed grateful to her for that, and for her able representation of Iceland in this part of the country. She is equally active in her American Red Cross, American-Legion auxi-

liary, Tacoma Philharmonic, and Tacoma Ladies' Music club, where she is 1st vice-president and director of their Tuesday afternoon Musicales.

Mrs. Stevens has directed church choirs and done choral work for various clubs. She also has a mixed double quartette which, especially features songs in all the Scandinavian languages for Leif Erikson Day. She organized, and has directed for seven years, a woman's ensemble, — the Normanette Chorus, which presents a spring concert each year, besides appearing on special programs in Tacoma and other N.W. cities.

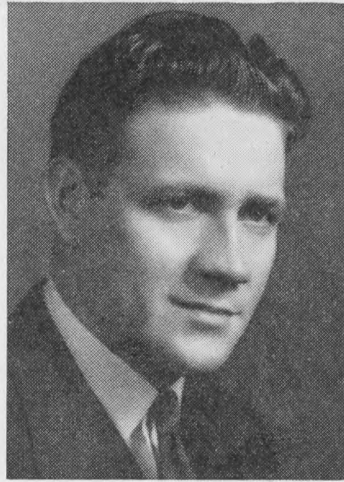
Being essentially kind and generous, Ninna Stevens, — and her husband equally so, — has gained the biggest reward of all, — the friendship of a host of people. Teaching piano and voice, off and on, during her long career in music, has given her added satisfaction, and she cherishes the loyalty of young persons whom she has helped and encouraged while they were beginners. She will also tell you that she, herself, is but a beginner, for to the study and pursuit of the devine art of music, there is no end!



During the war, several families from the Icelandic communities in N. Dak., came to the west coast, to take part in the war industries. Some of these are now permanent residents of the city of Seattle. The Calvary Lutheran Church and the Icelandic club 'Vestri,' thus received new and helpful membership.

Among those who immediately contributed to the "artistic efforts" of these organizations were Tani Bjornson and his wife Sigrid. Previously he was well known as baritone soloist and, at one time, assistant director of the Icelandic Male Chorus in N. D.

Although music is only his avocation,



Tani Bjornson

he studies voice with private teachers and practices diligently. He is increasingly gaining in popularity as a soloist in this area. This spring he sang the part of the Admiral with a Seattle group in the Gilbert-Sullivan operetta, **H.M.S. Pinafore**, and was well received both for his singing and his acting. He enjoyed the experience very much and feels that he would like to do more of that type of singing.

Being kind and co-operative to a high degree, he is in great demand in his immediate neighborhood, as a soloist, and choir leader for special occasions. He is also choir director at Calvary Lutheran Church.

The large Bjornson family just naturally took to music from childhood. Tani's father, Halldor Bjornson, who passed away in 1948, was church organist and leader in musical activities in his community of Svold, N.D., and his mother, Jakobina (Dinusson), encouraged her children in their love of music. One of Tani's sisters, Mrs. Jon Goodman, at Hallson, N.D., is an able pianist, while a brother, Tryggvi, teaches piano in New York, and is receiving

recognition for his original compositions.

Tani is working as instructor in woodwork at Boeing Airplane Co., with his wife and two children he lives at 6711-27th N.W., Seattle. His wife is his able accompanist and together

they generously assist in a variety of musical activities of the community.

To Tani Bjornson music is more than a mere pastime, or even an avocation. It fulfills his deep desires and gives him a suitable outlet for his artistic temperament.

Housewife Wins Scholarship

Mrs. F. V. Benedictson of Riverton, Man., took a course at the Manitoba Technical Institute (summer school) July 4 - 29th, in Arts and Crafts, and was granted one of the W. A. McIntyre scholarships of \$50, which are provided for a limited number of teachers, to take the summer course.

Mrs. Benedictson, who has been a busy housewife for 25 years, was a teacher before her marriage, and has never lost the valuable attribute of being a constant seeker after knowledge. She took her grade XII extramurally, then studied four years of French (grades IX, X, XI and XII), at the same time as she was keeping up a home for her family, and teaching school in Riverton. This was during, and after the war when many former teachers were called on to lend their services to the profession.

During this summer's Course she was working towards her First Class Professional certificate.

Mr. and Mrs. Benedictson, — Valdi and Freda, — as they are always called by their friends, celebrated their silver wedding in August, and were royally feted by the community which they have served so loyally for all the years of their married life. Both have given outstanding service to church, social and cultural efforts in Riverton. Mr. Benedictson, who is employed with Sigurdsson-Thorvaldson Co., has served

for a number of years on the Lutheran church board, as well as numerous other committees. Mrs. Benedictson, busy housewife, school teacher, and member of various organizations, yet found time to be one of the leaders of the Riverton Women's Study Group (organized by Mrs. Danielson in 1947), which has now had two successful seasons. She also did most effective work in the Children's Icelandic school.

Mr. and Mrs. Benedictson have a teen-age daughter and two grown sons. Of their three sons, two served in the Canadian Forces, the oldest one, Allan, a very promising University student, being killed in action May 1st, 1945.



Wins Another Prize

It was recently announced in the "Grand Forks Herald" Grand Forks, N.D., that Richard Beck Jr., son of Dr. and Mrs. Richard Beck of that city had been awarded the first prize for Model Car Construction in the Junior Model Car Competition in the United States open to high school students. The prize was \$150. and a silver ring.

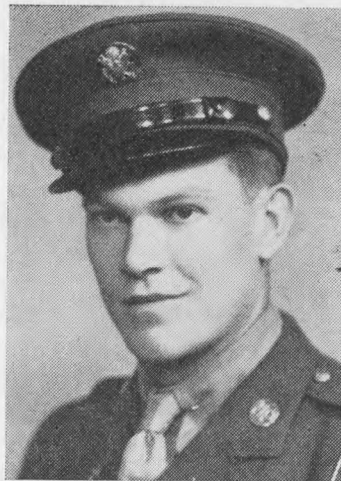
This competition is sponsored annually by the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild, Detroit, Mich.

This is the second time Richard has entered this competition and won a prize. See Icelandic Canadian Magazine Autumn Issue 1948.

OUR WAR EFFORT



Halldor Carl Karason

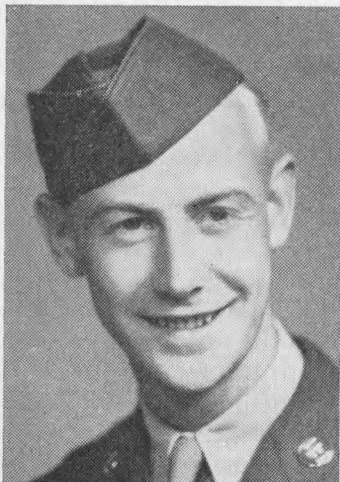


Erlendur Helgi Karason

HALLDOR CARL KARASON—Born in Blaine, Wash., Jan. 13, 1914. Entered the U.S. Army 1943 and served in New Guinea, Philippines, and in the Japanese occupation. Discharged January 1946.

ERLENDUR HELGI KARASON—Born in Blaine, Wash., February 4, 1916. Entered the U.S. Army 1942 and served as Military Police at Camp Callan, Calif. Discharged 1945.

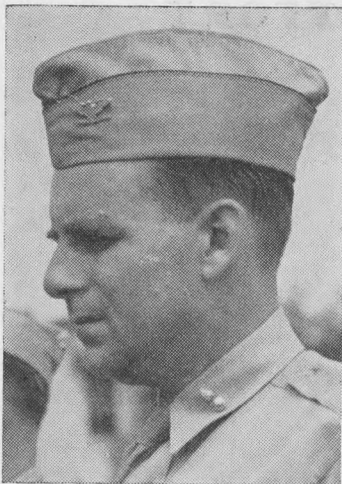
Sons of Guðbjartur and the late Ingibjörg Karason, Blaine, Wash.



CARL FRANKLIN JOHNSON — Born in Blaine, Wash., March 18, 1919. Entered the U.S. Army Air Force 1943. Served with "The Jolly Rodgers" in New Guinea and the Philippines. Discharged 1946. Son of John F. and Asrún Johnson, Blaine, Wash.



HELGI (WALTER) JOHNSON—Born in Iceland, May 24, 1899. Served in World War I with the 108th Batt. and Canadian Engineers. Enlisted in R.C.A.S.C. Dec. 1940. Served in Canada as N.C.O. 1/c supplies until Sept. '45. Son of Jón Jónsson (from Mýri, Iceland) and Kristjana Jónsdóttir, White Rock, B.C.



Lieut.-Col. F. A. Hansen

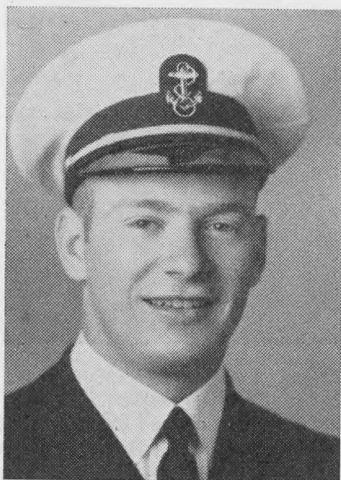


Major E. D. Hansen

LIEUT.-COL. FLOYD ALLAN HANSEN—Born in Sumas, Wash., October 22, 1908. Graduated from United States Military Academy, West Point, June 10, 1932. He was stationed at several schools and when war broke out he was at Picaninny Arsenal, N. J. His section designed and supervised the running of the ammunition loading plants all over the country. In Dec. 1942 he was transferred into Field, taking command of the Ordnance of the 8th Armoured Div. In 1943 he embarked for Europe and remained there with the Hq, 1st Army until he returned to U.S.A. enroute to the Pacific theatre. When the war with Japan ended he returned to the U.S.A. and is now Chief of Ordnance Inspector in Washington. Awarded the Merit of Legion medal.

MAJOR ELMER DUANE HANSEN—Born in Sumas, Wash., July 9, 1910. He was with the Army Air Force in Shanghai and China. Awarded the Soldier's Medal for pulling a man out of a burning plane.

Sons of Mr. Lynd and Mrs. Zena Lee Hansen



Lt. (j.g.) Oscar William Hanson

LT. (j.g.) OSCAR WILLIAM HANSON



Born July 25, 1922. Served in U.S. Navy Air Corps as Pilot. Son of Mr. Jon and Mrs. Anna Hanson.

Lt. Oscar William Hanson, Lieut.-Col. F. A. Hansen and Major E. D. Hansen, are nephews of Mrs. Guðmundur Bjarnason and Mrs. L. Thomsen. Winnipeg, Man.

The Helping Hand



Mrs. Gudrun Olgeirson, R.N.

Mrs. Olgeirson drove smartly up to the gate and brought to a stop the good old car, which, though somewhat the worse for wear, always got her to her destination. This was only the ninth or tenth time, during my six-weeks' pleasant sojourn in North Dakota, that she had come to pick me up, take me around to see the splendid farms of the district, and give me a chance to get acquainted with the people. Being the generous, thoughtful person that she is, she at once made it her business to make my stay interesting and enjoyable. These pleasant excursions, usually began with supper at the Olgeirson home and often ended in an all-night visit there.

But Mrs. Olgeirson was late, for the second time and for the same reason. So she apologized, "I'm so sorry, but I was called out on a case".

I knew enough already about her

work in the district to understand perfectly, and later, I had the privilege of going with her on one of her calls to visit the sick.

Just before I left Mountain, N. D., I heard that Mrs. Olgeirson had been persuaded, albeit somewhat reluctantly, to accept the position of Matron of the Old Folks' Home there, when it opens in October. The Board of Directors then heaved a sigh of thankfulness feeling that the "Home" was now "in safe hands".

Mrs. Olgeirson approaches her new work with humility and some trepidation. "You know", she says, "I'm not as young as I used to be, and this will be a heavy responsibility".

No, she is not young, for this position of trust, now so confidently laid on her shoulders, by her friends of long standing, is the culmination of thirty-five years of devoted service to her community!

Early in life Gudrun Erlendson* knew her calling, — she wanted to be a nurse! But in her community there were no facilities for training, — forty years ago, so the determined young woman fared forth alone to Duluth, Minn., where she trained at St. Luke's Training School.

After working at her profession for a year, she was married in June, 1914, to Bjorn F. Olgeirson, and they settled on her father's farm near Mountain. That was thirty-five years ago and she has been nursing ever since!

How many times, I wonder, has

* Gudrun, born at Milton, N. Dak., is the daughter of the late Finnogi and Kristjana (Hermannssdóttir) Erlendson. Her husband, Bjorn came from Garði, Fnjóskadal, Iceland.

there echoed through the hushed and fearful household of a N. Dak. home, when sickness struck and no doctor was available, the whispered plea, "Go and get Gunna Olgeirson, — and hurry!" And Gunna always came, not only as an efficient, professional nurse, but also as a friend and counsellor.

Through the years she has worked with, and under the direction of most of the doctors in the surrounding towns. But often, especially in the early days, she had to work alone, and with limited facilities. But she made up any lack, by giving all the more generously of her own resources: skill, intelligence, intuition and physical endurance.

Following the arrival of the telephone, when people called instead of coming for her, she drove her own pony, which her ever-helpful husband would hitch to buggy or cutter, while she bundled up in furs or raincoat according to the season. Bucking a N. Dak. blizzard or struggling through axle-deep mud in a spring thaw, she did not allow to upset her unduly, arriving at the sick bed full of vigor and good cheer.

From one such trip she brought home with her a wee boy-infant, whose mother was dangerously ill; and from then on he became the lovingly nurtured child of the Olgeirson household, cared for by Bjorn, and by Gudrun's mother, when she herself was away nursing the sick. The little boy, William Joseph (Tomasson) who proudly bears the Olgeirson name, is now married and living in the district. With his wife, Esther, and their little daughter he takes joy in returning the love and attention which has been showered upon him by his foster parents.

Indeed, the neighbors and the whole community, by many little acts of

courtesy and kindness, have continually shown their appreciation to the Olgeirsons, both of whom have been solid supporters of every worth-while community project. Their home, too, has been one of the centres for cultural and social activities, both of them being fond of good reading, interesting conversationalists, and lovers of good music. Bjorn, who is exceptionally well versed in Icelandic literature, ancient and modern, possessed in his prime, a fine tenor voice which was much appreciated in choral work.

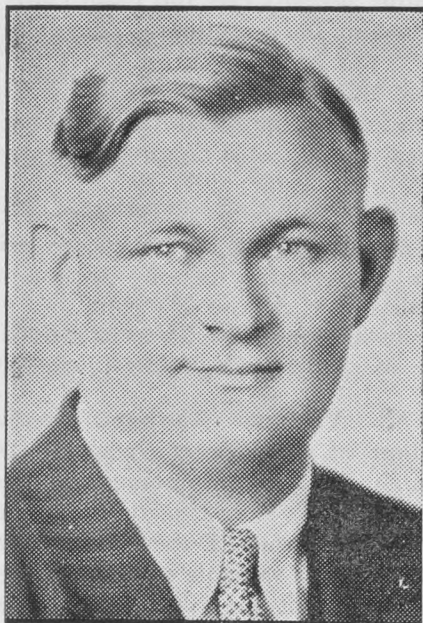
Now that Bjorn has reached the age of four-score years, he has retired from active farming and they have spent the last two winters at Portland, Oregon, with Gudrun's sister. But they were happy to come back and spend the summer at the pleasant old homestead, where their host of friends still gather around them, and often there are jolly picnic lunches or suppers served on their spacious lawn, ending with the group gathering around the piano for a sing-song in which Bjorn can join with hearty enthusiasm.

Gudrun felt she could just as well be useful to humanity at Portland, so she took a position as nurse at St. Vincent's Hospital. But first she had to pass a number of technical tests and practical exams, which were required of one who, during all her nursing career had been more or less 'on her own', and did not come equipped with sheaves of recommendations from various hospitals. These, at the age of sixty-two, she took in her stride, and came through with distinction.

She likes to remember the story of the colored man who lay very ill in one of the wards at St. Vincent's. Perhaps the nurses did not show him quite the same attention as they gave to the white patients. But Gudrun ministered to him with her usual sympathy and

In The News

WINS COMPETITION



Mr. Oli N. Kardal, of Gimli, Man., was recently winner in the song competition broadcast from station WCCO, Minneapolis, on the "Stairway to Stardom" program. As successful contestant he won the privilege of singing daily, for a week, during the Minnesota State Fair, which took place the last week of August. The daily programs were broadcast over WCCO.

Mr. Kardal's participation in the competition was unpremeditated, almost accidental. It happened that he was visiting with friends in Minneapolis, who strongly urged him to enter the contest. He sang Prof. S. K. Hall's delightful song "Love's Rapture", — (Eng. translation of St. Thorsteinsson's poem, "Ástarsæla") and was lauded by his listeners present at the broadcast.

Oli Kardal has had only a limited opportunity for musical training but the few lessons he has taken have nev-

ertheless served to develop his fine tenor voice, and he is well known and much appreciated, as a soloist in the Icel. communities of Manitoba and further afield.

Mr. Kardal was born at Blönduós, Húnavatnssýsla, Iceland and came to New Iceland (Hnausa, Man.) when 12 years old. Since 1930 he has resided at Gimli, and is engaged in fishing. His wife, Sylvia, took over the position of Postmaster from her late father Gudni Thorsteinsson. She is an able pianist and accompanist and has encouraged Oli to dovetail into his strenuous life as a fisherman, some valuable hours of singing practice.

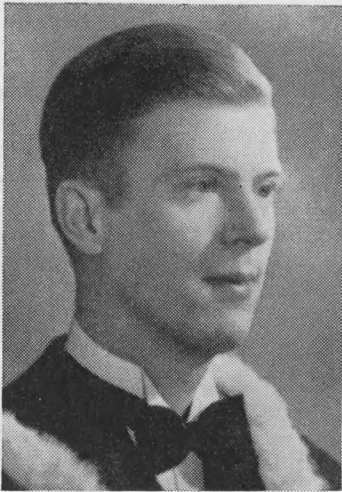
Mr. Kardal is now planning to take some vocal training at the McPhail School of Music in Minneapolis.



NEWS FROM VANCOUVER

The 14th annual Mid-Summer Festival was held in Swedish Park (Seymour Park) June 26th. The festival is sponsored by 17 organizations representing Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland and Denmark, who have joined together to form "The Scandinavian Central Committee". About 5,000 people were gathered at the festival, and the program consisted of speeches, and vocal and instrumental music. The Bellman Male Chorus gave a group of songs, directed by the choirmaster, S. Solvason.

One feature of the program each year, is the selection of "Queens", one from each national group, who are dressed in their national costumes. The young lady representing Iceland this year was Miss Joyce Sumarlidason.



Baldur LeRoy Danielson was appointed Chief Metallurgist of Vulcan Iron and Engineering Co., Winnipeg, Jan. 1. 1949.

Following his Science course at the University of Manitoba, he took a position with the company in 1944, as assistant to Jon Olafsson, who was then Chief Metallurgist, and has now retired, (see Icel. Can. Winter, 1947).

Last July Baldur flew to Detroit, Mich., to represent his company at a five-day conference of technical men in the Foundry Industry, from various parts of the United States.

Baldur, who is the only son of Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Danielson, 869 Garfield St., Winnipeg, was born at Arborg, Man. where he attended public and high school. During his senior years at the university he served as treasurer of the Science Faculty.

He was married in 1948 to Miss Emily White of Winnipeg.

★

Herman Arason of Glenboro, Man., won third place in the Kiwanis Club third annual public speaking contest for young people this summer. The winner was Jean McNair of Neepawa

and Art Warkentine, Morden, took second place.

The Dept. of Agriculture, through its extension service enlists the aid of the young people's calf and grain clubs in enrolling the contestants. The elimination was held in the legislative building, and the finals at a Kiwanis Club luncheon in the Royal Alexandra hotel. Ten young people ranging in age from 12 to 21, came to Winnipeg for the contest, 54 having taken part in the district meets. All the contestants spoke on conservation of our natural resources. There are 600 grain and calf clubs in Manitoba with 7,000 members.

★

Mr. Valdimar Bjornson, associate editor of the Pioneer Press and Dispatch, St. Paul, Minnesota, has been decorated by King Haakon of Norway, with the Cross of the Order of St. Olaf, for his valuable services rendered on behalf of the Norwegian government and nation during and after World War II.

★

Mr. Axel Vopnfjord, B.A., B.Ed., immediate past president of the Icelandic Canadian Club and member of the staff of the Isaac Brock School has left with his family for Aberdeen, Wash., to take a position as an exchange teacher there for the coming year. He was guest speaker at the Icel. celebration at Blaine, Wash., this year.

★

Awards

Eggert Peterson won a \$60 Isbister Scholarship this year. Eggert is a brilliant student. He entered the United College last fall and on his entrance to that institute was awarded a special scholarship of \$100. (Icelandic Canadian, Winter issue 1948).

Graduates

Arnthor Marino Kristjansson received his Doctor's Degree from McGill University of Montreal, P.Q. His thesis being "Exchange Reaction of Radioactive Sodium Isolate, with Aromatic Iodide."

Marino graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in the spring of 1942. Served with the Canadian Artillery, Commissioned in 1944. After demobilization in 1945 he taught school in Saskatchewan. In the fall of 1947, Marino received a scholarship from the National Research Council which enabled him to attend the McGill University of Montreal.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Hakon Kristjansson of Wynyard, Sask.



Grettir Valdimar Kristjansson graduated in Medicine with honors from the Queens University of Kingston, Ont., in June of this year. Dr. Kristjansson specialized in surgery. He is at present with the Ottawa Civic Hospital.

Dr. Kristjansson was born in Winnipegosis, he moved to GERALTON, Ont., with his parents in 1938. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Otto Kristjansson of Geraldton, Ont.

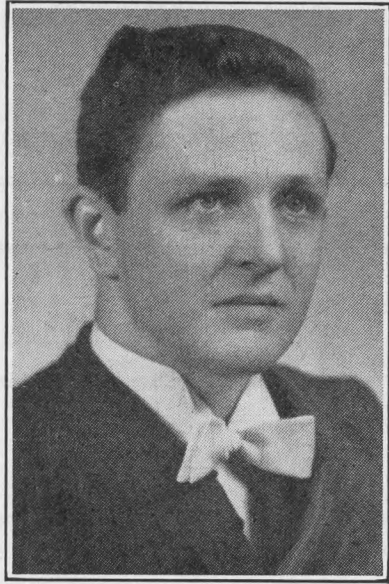


Mr. James Alexander McNeal graduated May 11th, with a B.A. degree from the U. of B. C., with honors. He has left to study languages at the U. of Virginia, and next year he will have a position as professor in German, at the U. of Berkley, Calif. Mr. McNeal's mother is Kristin, daughter of Bernard Thorsteinson, a building contractor in Vancouver, but now retired. Mrs. McNeal has two sisters in Vancouver, the soloist and radio singer Mrs. Thora Thorstein-

son Smith, and Miss Lillian Thorsteinson, who has been a teacher in Vancouver for over 30 years.



Gets Fellowship



Dr. Harold Blondal, B.Sc. (B.E.), M.D. has been awarded a fellowship by the National Research Council of Canada to carry on research work in connection with the possibility of utilizing atomic energy in the field of medicine. He is a son of Mrs. Gudrun Blondal and the late Dr. A. Blondal. Dr. and Mrs. Blondal are leaving for Chalk River, Ont., where he will begin his research work in September. (For war service record, see Icelandic Canadian, September 1943, p. 29.)

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ICELAND IN MANITOBA

Sagas of Heroic Pioneers in Manitoba

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They were beset with more than their fair share of pioneering hardships, yet within a year, their native love for learning and literature was responsible for putting into operation, both a school and a newspaper.

Time has not slowed their work nor dimmed their vision. Today, The Dominion points with pride to the cultural contributions of its Icelanders in Canada.

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